

## A VISIT TO MAUDE ADAMS' LIBRARY.

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

the owner's catholicity of taste, until in the scope and multitude of the volumes I saw the career of an omnivorous reader.

The step that brought me into the book room was charming in its results. I knew it at once for the owner's main workroom. It was impressively individualized—as replete with character as a fine old etching. It spoke eloquently of four things—simplicity, earnestness, industry, and mental alertness. I had no need to meet Miss Maude Adams after entering it. To see this room was to know her.

It was midday when I called and the mistress of the house had not yet returned from the theater. I had ample leisure to observe the room—as unlike all other rooms as she who is its informing spirit is unlike all other personalities. Books and books and books, the cheerful crackling of an open fire, the comfort of a great, deep, softly cushioned crimson divan, gave the solitude of the place a sense of companionship and cheer.

All the little details of furnishing or of decoration seemed to speak to one. A Damascus blade, a quaint and curious idol of ancient Egyptian stone, an illuminated medieval Madonna, a crucifix from some wayside Italian shrine—these things sent one's heart on a pilgrimage through the ages to the ends of the earth. But a charming off in pencil sketch by Dana Gibson over the fireplace brought it back. And the comfortable sense of books and the scent of fresh roses held it a willing prisoner in the now and here.

I loafed at my ease in a great chair whose back and sides enfolded me hospitably. The dust and smoke, the noise and newness of work-a-day New York seemed very far away from the silence and simplicity and quaintness of everything about me. A cheerful fire crackled on a hearth upon the top of which some clever artisan had fashioned in raised iron letters the very spirit of the place, "Old books to read, old wood to burn, old friends to love."

There was a strange charm in allowing the whole multitude of fancies to come whispering about one's sense. The whole house was silent. One could well imagine how perfectly here might the cares of a day go to sleep and leave one to snatch a joyous feeling of disenchantment. It was here that Peter Pan had been created, and the whole spirit and atmosphere of the play imagined forth. Before these burning coals and within this perfect quiet and simplicity must have easily been recalled the stories of the secret world and midnight pranks of fairyland. The whole band of fairies—ancient and modern; pirates, Indians, crocodiles and wolves, elves and sprites, could not but come flitting between fancy's eye and the leaping flames of the fireplace. Even as I stared I thought for a minute they were making themselves visible to me upon the mantelpiece above—until closer scrutiny proved them to

be three toy animals—a wolf, a lion, and a dog with an abbreviated tail—unmistakably "Nana"—all, doubtless, the gift of some enthusiastic youthful admirer.

I had taken up the book nearest me as it lay open on the French wall table. It was the first edition copy of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland."

I was surrounded on three sides by book shelves which towered a foot or more above my shoulders. There was the same diversity of taste here that I had noticed about the books in the hall room, which, as I could now see, had simply been crowded out of the bookroom. Just behind at the end of the sofa and easily taken down by one who read while reclining was a remarkably complete set of volumes on Egypt ancient and modern. There were books on the Khedive, and the building of the celebrated dam at Assuan, and elaborate plates of the great Assyrian and Egyptian excavations—many of them bedecked in their margins with curious little circles and other strange pencilings by their owner.

The set of shelves at the opposite end of the sofa were entirely given to Shakespeare and his commentators. It seemed to me a fine openness of mind and broadness of view which could as freely accord shelf space to such established authorities as Ward, Fleay, Furnivall and Furness—and at the same time to the laugh provoker, Z. Jackson, who for one Shakespearean note which is obvious has a genius for offering ten which are all wrong.

There was not much wall space left for pictures because of the great room given to books. But whatever each bit of wall held took one far away, as if led by Tinker Bell over the seas to strange lands. In one space was a glimpse of Egypt and the dark east in the form of a fine engraving of Baalbec—which revealed the Temple of the Sun, built by Solomon for his wife who was a worshiper of Baal. And to look opposite was to feel something of a Tours in a group of cathedral etchings carefully selected so as to indicate the fine structural lines which resulted in Isle de France Gothic. They were all so many tokens of one who loves life best when, like Peter Pan, "with a wiggle of her shoulders," she becomes a buoyant traveler among unknown people in lands beyond the seas.

But by now twilight had ascended completely from the east—and the bookroom was enshrouded in darkness, except for the spot of light beneath the lamp as if Tinker Bell was on guard. From somewhere about the house came the sound of a clock chiming an hour which my own watch told me was 6. My hostess had not come, but my time was up. The last thing to catch my eye was one of the open volumes on the floor of the hall room—a bit of bookmaking set up not in a day or month, but evidently in the slow, sure process of testing workmanship. It lay open at the passage, which, in hastily chosen English, read thus:

"She excelled in the gradations, in those subtle passings from one tone to another which express the vicissitudes of passion. No one ever so thoroughly understood the art of

mute acting—the art of listening perfectly and yet acting with one's whole person while another character is speaking. It does not appear that off the stage she possessed a very striking or extraordinary beauty; but in her was an assembling, a harmony of all nature's finest beauties. Full of soul and of feeling, an untiring student, passionately in love with her art—everything contributed to make her the great reproducer of the subtlest and finest of human emotions—and this to a degree unsurpassed in her own day."

In these lines Sainte Beuve had the great actress, Adrienne Le Couvreur in mind, and I, as I read—Maude Adams.

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